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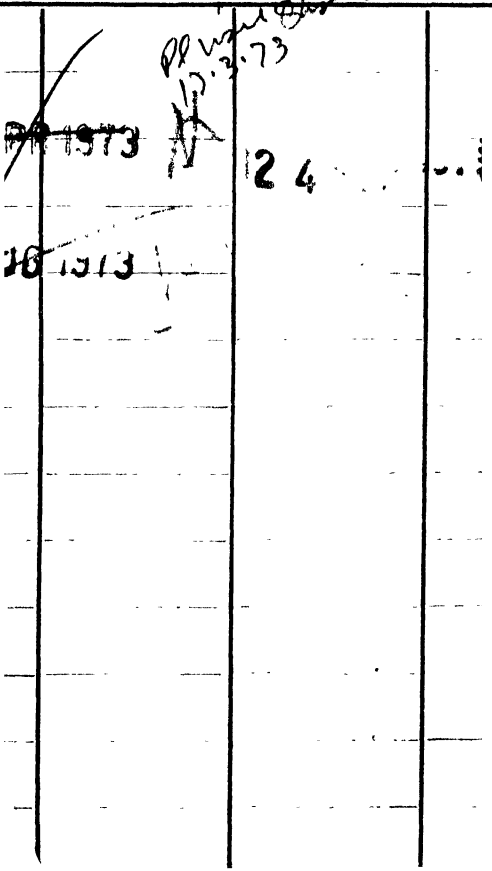

THE ROCK

THE ROCK

A PAGEANT PLAY, WRITTEN FOR PERFORMANCE
AT SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE
28 MAY – 9 JUNE 1934
ON BEHALF OF THE
FORTY-FIVE CHURCHES FUND
OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON

Book of Words by

T. S. ELIOT

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PREFATORY NOTE

I cannot consider myself the author of the "play", but only of the words which are printed here. The scenario, incorporating some historical scenes suggested by the Rev. R. Webb-Odell, is by Mr. E. Martin Browne, under whose direction I wrote the choruses and dialogues, and submissive to whose expert criticism I rewrote much of them. Of only one scene am I literally the author: for this scene and of course for the sentiments expressed in the choruses I must assume the responsibility.

I should like to make grateful acknowledgment of the collaboration of Dr. Martin Shaw, who composed the music. To Mr. F. V. Morley I am indebted for one speech for which technical knowledge of bricklaying was required; to Major Bonamy Dobrée for correcting the diction of the Christopher Wren scene; to Mr. W. F. Cachemaille-Day for information concerning the relations of architects, contractors and foremen. The Rev. Vincent Howson has so completely rewritten, amplified and condensed the dialogue between himself ("Bert") and his mates, that he deserves the title of joint author.

T. S. E.

April 1934

PART I

The scene is an open place, with an irregular rocky hill in the middle. The CHORUS, *seven male and ten female figures, are discovered. They speak as the voice of the Church of God.*

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.

I journeyed to London, to the timekept City,
Where the River flows, with foreign flotations.
There I was told: we have too many churches,
And too few chop-houses. There I was told
Let the vicars retire. Men do not need the Church

In the place where they work, but where they spend their Sundays.
In the City, we need no bells:
Let them waken the suburbs.
I journeyed to the suburbs, and there I was told:
We toil for six days, on the seventh we must motor
To Hindhead, or Maidenhead.
If the weather is foul we stay at home and read the papers.
In industrial districts, there I was told
Of economic laws.
In the pleasant countryside, there it seemed
That the country now is only fit for picnics.
And the Church does not seem to be wanted
In country or in suburb; and in the town
Only for important weddings.

CHORUS LEADER.
Silence! and preserve respectful distance.
For I perceive approaching
The Rock. Who will perhaps answer our doubtings.
The Rock. The Watcher. The Stranger.
He who has seen what has happened
And who sees what is to happen.
The Witness. The Critic. The Stranger.
The God-shaken, in whom is the truth inborn.

Enter the ROCK, *led by a* BOY.
THE ROCK.
The lot of man is ceaseless labour,
Or ceaseless idleness, which is still harder,
Or irregular labour, which is not pleasant.
I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know
That it is hard to be really useful, resigning
The things that men count for happiness, seeking
The good deeds that lead to obscurity, accepting

With equal face those that bring ignominy,
The applause of all or the love of none.
All men are ready to invest their money
But most expect dividends.
I say to you: *Make perfect your will.*
I say: take no thought of the harvest,
But only of proper sowing.

The world turns and the world changes,
But one thing does not change.
In all of my years, one thing does not change.
However you disguise it, this thing does not change:
The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil.
Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;
The men you are in these times deride
What has been done of good, you find explanations
To satisfy the rational and enlightened mind.
Second, you neglect and belittle the desert.
The desert is not remote in southern tropics,
The desert is not only around the corner,
The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,
The desert is in the heart of your brother.
The good man is the builder, if he build what is good.
I will show you the things that are now being done,
And some of the things that were long ago done,
That you may take heart. Make perfect your will.
Let me show you the work of the humble. Listen.

The lights fade; in the semi-darkness the voices of WORKMEN *are heard chanting.*

In the vacant places
We will build with new bricks
There are hands and machines
And clay for new brick

And lime for new mortar
Where the bricks are fallen
We will build with new stone
Where the beams are rotten
We will build with new timbers
Where the word is unspoken
We will build with new speech
There is work together
A Church for all
And a job for each
Every man to his work.

Now a group of WORKMEN *is silhouetted against the dim sky. From farther away, they are answered by voices of the* UNEMPLOYED.

No man has hired us
With pocketed hands
And lowered faces
We stand about in open places
And shiver in unlit rooms.
Only the wind moves
Over empty fields, untilled
Where the plough rests, at an angle
To the furrow. In this land
There shall be one cigarette to two men,
To two women one half pint of bitter
Ale. In this land
No man has hired us.
Our life is unwelcome, our death
Unmentioned in "The Times".

Chant of WORKMEN *again.*

The river flows, the seasons turn,
The sparrow and starling have no time to waste.
If men do not build

How shall they live?
When the field is tilled
And the wheat is bread
They shall not die in a shortened bed
And a narrow sheet. In this street
There is no beginning, no movement, no peace and no end
But noise without speech, food without taste.
Without delay, without haste
We would build the beginning and the end of this street.
We build the meaning:
A Church for all
And a job for each
Each man to his work.

The lights are coming up and discover a small group of modern WORKMEN *digging and building foundations.*

ETHELBERT [*the foreman, singing*].
"A pick-axe and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding-sheet. . . ."

I 'eard that at the Old Vic once.

ALFRED. Time to pack up, Bert.

ETHELBERT. You're always wantin' to pack up, you are. You start in the mornin', and time you've 'ad your little snack, soon as you've 'ad your blow, you wants to knock off for dinner. This 'ere is a church you're workin' on, not a public 'ouse. I reckon you think you're something like a bank clerk. I tell you what: you try puttin' in a extra ten minutes every night in the cause o' religion, and see 'ow you get on.

ALFRED. Don't see as it makes any difference whether it's a church or a public or a bank I'm puttin' up. I draws me dough just the same so it's all the same to me.

EDWIN. And the licensee of the Bunch o' Grapes gets your money just the same, Fred, so it's all the same to 'im.

ALFRED. Nah then, not so much o' your ruddy lip, young Edwin. You ain't never been in a church or a bank, you ain't.

ETHELBERT. 'Arf a mo', 'arf a mo'. It's lucky for you two as you've got someone what's done a bit o' lookin' into things to keep you in line. What's wrong with you is, you're a lot too cocksure. Ain't you ever 'eard me speak o' the principles of Social Credit Reform?

ALFRED. 'Ow much?

ETHELBERT. What Major Douglas 'as to say about banks. It'd take me hours to explain it to you two, and it's dry work. Only if I 'ad a pint o' brown, I'd show you 'ow your money goes. I asks you: 'oo runs the banks? Nobody knows. A lot o' your old Eton pals gets round a table once a month and 'as a bit o' lunch, and then they reads out a report from someone 'oo ain't there. Why ain't 'e there? Nobody knows, and nobody don't care neither. 'Oo makes the profits? Nobody knows. Why? I'll tell you why: 'cos they ain't there, see? Nobody ain't there. You and I ain't there; the shareholders ain't there, and their divvies ain't 'ardly there either, 'cos they paid too 'ot for their shares. That's a bank, that is. It's all profit what nobody gets and nobody knows 'ow they gets it. Nah, then: you take a church. There ain't no profit about that. It's for you and me. The parson bloke, 'e don't get much out of it, leastways not by the looks of some I've seen. There ain't any share'olders or directors. The likes o' you and me tries to walk into a bank, and the commission bloke on the door looks at us and says: "'op it!" But walk into a church! You can sit where you fancy and you're welcome. And let me tell you, bein' in the know, as this 'ere church we're puttin' up is bein' built 'arf on subscriptions from people what can't afford it, and 'arf on 'ope.

ALFRED. Maybe there's something in what you say, Bert.

ETHELBERT. Which leads me to this 'ere: these people ain't just set aside somethin' out o' profits for buildin' this church, in the expectation of makin' more profits out of it. They ain't got a millionaire be'ind 'em to see it through. They ain't goin' to make nothin' out of it. They've been worryin' and scrapin' to get a little more money 'ere, and save another little bit there. And when you thinks o' all the 'opes and worries and thinkin' and prayin' that's gone into this 'ere job, and all the disappointments maybe on the way, why 'ere we are buildin' 'em all into this church; and in buildin' this church we're buildin' somethin' more than walls o' bricks and mortar.

EDWIN. I'd like to 'ear you explain your meanin', Bert.

ETHELBERT. Us 'ere, I says, Fred, is doin' somethink which is more 'n just bricks and mortar. Now, I know what the Old Book says. You take the state o' man. You know the improvement of the state o' man. That ain't bricks and mortar. No. I says to you, Fred, and to you, Edwin, see what the Book says. There's David. One o' them fancy lads—a good soldier and fond o' the ladies—but a great one for 'is church. And what does it say. The Lord loved 'im 'cause 'e was a fine fellow on one side and as bad as they make 'em on the other. He was put up wrong. Now David was sittin' in 'is 'ouse thinkin', and 'e says, everyone 'as got a 'ouse to live in. You blokes what I've raised up from bein' cow'erds to stand around my kingly throne, though you're nothin' but a lot o' sore-eyed monkeys even now—you've all got a 'ouse to live in. But what about the Lord? 'E ain't got a 'ouse to live in. Let's build 'im a 'ouse. And Solomon 'e built the Temple. There always 'as been someone buildin' a church. Always someone buildin', buildin', buildin'. It's God's 'ouse and it's the people's 'ouse and it's our 'ouse. You and me, Fred, and you, young Edwin, are doin' somethin' for God and somethin' for 'umanity what always 'as to be done. There's

somethin' strong and lastin' about a buildin'. You needn't believe in God but you've got to believe in a buildin'. It goes up and up in the sky, and on and on through the years, and it speaks with its lights and its bells in the night and in the sunshine—and it stands when you and I are dust, what built it for the glory of God—and that church 'as been put up with 'ands, buildin', buildin', buildin'—all through the years—in the ruddy rain and 'eat and 'ail and snow—workin' in bricks and mortar, goin' on forever and ever and ever, buildin' the Church of God.

EDWIN. You do talk like a book, Bert.

ALFRED. 'Ere's what many says, though. I don't say as I 'olds with it myself, but there's some as says it. They says as 'ow mankind 'as made a lot o' progress since the old days o' religion: become more 'uman, so to speak. In the old days there wasn't no sciences, and no education, and people was simple-minded, so that religion served the purpose of everythin' else. Then what's more, there wasn't any theatres, or any music but singin' 'ymns; and there wasn't any papers and people couldn't read nor write anyway. And what's more, there wasn't any charities nor gov'ment works o' no kind; and when a man was up against it there was nowheres else to go for 'elp but only to the church people; and then the monks' 'ouses they served as 'otels and did all kind o' good work too. Well, in those times there was a lot to be said for buildin' churches. But ain't all that past and done with?

EDWIN. Well, that bein' the case, Fred, 'ow do you explain people wantin' to go on buildin' churches and keepin' 'em goin' like they do?

ALFRED. I didn't say as I 'eld with this opinion, did I? I'm just puttin' a case. But so far as your remark goes, Ted, people goin' on bein' religious when there don't seem no reasonable excuse for it, I've thought that out, and it come to me as religion is like drink. People may not want it

drawn very strong, or very much o' the time, most of 'em; but they seems to like to know that it's always there *if* and *'ow* they do want it. And if they don't get it one way, they will another. Look at what's been 'appenin' in the U.S. these recent years. You can't keep people off drink by tellin' 'em it's so 'armful they mustn't 'ave it; and you can't keep 'em off religion, seemin'ly, by tellin' 'em it's so old-fashioned they oughtn't to want it.

EDWIN. That's a funny way to talk o' religion, Fred.

ETHELBERT. No, Fred's right on that point; and no disrespect intended, I'm sure.

ALFRED. All the same, though, there's many thinks they *can* do without. Look at all what's goin' on in Russia. Do you think they'll manage to make do without religion, Bert?

ETHELBERT. Ah, they wants it just as bad as anybody—and they've got it a 'ole lot worse. If people don't take their religion in the usual proper way, they'll take it in other ways, such as politics; and then they get into a 'ell of a muddle. As you was more or less 'intin' yourself, Fred. And political religion is like invalid port: you calls it a medicine but it's soon just a 'abit.

EDWIN. You must 'ave read a lot o' 'istory, Bert.

ETHELBERT. I 'ave read a tidy bit.

ALFRED. But what about this point o' 'uman progress? It do seem as if people was a good deal more 'umane than they once was, from what I'm told: 'specially in the way o' bein' kind to animiles. And it don't seem as if that could be laid down to the influence o' Christianity.

ETHELBERT. When Christianity does somethin' for the world, then people likes to think they done it for themselves. That's the way o' the world, as the sayin' is. But for good and bad, people is still born very much the same. There's some new notion about time, what says that the past—what's be'ind you—is what's goin' to 'appen in the

future, bein' as the future 'as already 'appened. I 'aven't 'ad time to get the 'ang of it yet; but when I read about all those old blokes they seems much like us. . . .

The lights begin to change. Music sounds.

ETHELBERT. 'Ere, wot's this?

ALFRED. Blimey, Bert, you seem to 'ave 'it the nail on the 'ead this time!

The WORKMEN *step aside; gradually, as music and lights alter the scene, a* GROUP OF SAXONS *enter. The* WORKMEN, *withdrawn in a corner, observe the following scene with eager curiosity.*

1ST SAXON MAN. What do you think of the new faith preached by these priests of the God who rules, they say, in Rome?

1ST WOMAN. It brings no good, it brings no good. Do not listen to them. The gods will surely let us be destroyed if we listen to them. We have many enemies. Will not the gods favour those who keep the old faith?

2ND WOMAN. In time of trouble it is best to keep to the old gods whom we know.

2ND MAN. No, but these men seem good and peaceful, and they have great faith. I like their preaching and their kindness.

1ST WOMAN. O do not listen to them, do not listen to them.

3RD MAN. Yet it is a beautiful faith, if it were true. That their god should have been born among men, of a humble woman, and lived his life among folk like you and me, not kings and earls, and yet was truly god, and now is worshipped, they say, by very great kings: that is very wonderful.

Enter MELLITUS (*first Bishop of London*) *and* MONKS.

MELLITUS. My children, will you stay while I preach to you the word of God, and make clear the true faith, that you may believe and be saved to eternal life?

1ST MAN. Sir, we would hear you, most of us, though some of our women are weak and terrified. But it is not for humble folk like us to turn to your ways and trust to your leading, unless our king turns also.

MELLITUS. Be it so, for I see your king approaching. He shall be saved, and you with him, for it is the will of God.

Enter SABERT (*King of London*) *with* RETINUE.

SABERT. Priest of the foreign god, expound again your mysteries, the cross and the god who died like a man but lives again as a god. I will listen and my people shall listen with me.

MELLITUS' *sermon*

MELLITUS. King and People, I have already preached to you, not once but at sundry times, the mysteries of the Christian Faith. And that you have listened to me is, I am assured, already some sign of God's Grace upon you, that He wills that you and all the people of this land shall be saved. For I came to you, not as magicians and wonder-workers come, to deceive you with the false miracles of their father the devil. But I have come quietly, not like princes and potentates, but a humble man, lodging poorly, suffering much, lacking everything, even fresh water, and wishing only to live more lowly and suffer more durely still, remembering the humility and the sufferings of our Lord upon earth, and knowing myself the least of his servants. For God is not like the gods of your imagination whom you vainly worship. He does not come in pride, or to gratify pride. Your gods, you say, fight for you and strengthen you in battle. But I tell you that God is not only your God but the God of all men. He does not fight

for you except you fight for righteousness; for He is the God of your enemies also, even if your enemies know him not; and He loves all men, and would see them at peace with one another. You must not think, whether God be for you, but whether you be for God. So only shall you be freed from the pains of everlasting damnation, of which I have told you, and which are more terrible than any words of mine or of any man can describe to you.

SABERT. These are strange teachings to us; but by the Name of the God whom you preach, I will have your God, and He shall be my God and the God of my people of London, as he is already the God of my brother of Kent and of his people. And my people shall kneel with me and yield ourselves to Christ, and pray that he fight for us.

All kneel and the MODERN WORKMEN, *who have been watching, take off their caps and kneel also.*

MELLITUS. Blessed be God. Now in sign of your conversion, my children, and after I have baptised you, you shall build a church to God.

SABERT. On my hill. Let it be on my hill to the west of London!

MELLITUS. Be it so. And the church shall be built to the honour of the blessed St. Paul, whom I unworthily follow, and to the glory and worship of God.

SABERT. And when we are become Christians, shall we have the white bread to eat?

MELLITUS. You shall have the white bread to eat. For it is written: except ye eat of the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. But first of all, you must learn to pray. Instructed by saving precepts, and taught by Divine Example, we are bold to say—you must say after me. . . .

As they begin the "Our Father . . . " the lights grad-

ually fade out. In the distance, the BUILDERS' *song is heard.*

Ill done and undone,
London so fair.
We will build London
Bright in dark air,
With new bricks and mortar
Beside the Thames bord ·
Queen of Island and Water,
A House of Our Lord.

A Church for us all and work for us all and God's world for us all even unto this last.

As this ends the lights come up again, disclosing the CHORUS *alone.*

CHORUS.

Thus your fathers were made
Fellow citizens of the saints, of the household of GOD, being built upon the foundation
Of apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself the chief cornerstone.
But you, have you built well, that you now sit helpless in a ruined house?
Where many are born to idleness, to frittered lives and squalid deaths, embittered scorn in honeyless hives,
And those who would build and restore turn out the palms of their hands, or look in vain towards foreign lands for alms to be more or the urn to be filled.
Your building not fitly framed together, you sit ashamed and wonder whether and how you may be builded together for a habitation of GOD in the Spirit, the Spirit which moved on the face of the waters like a lantern set on the back of a tortoise.
And some say: "How can we love our neighbour? For love must be made real in act, as desire unites with

desired; we have only our labour to give and our labour is not required.
We wait on corners, with nothing to bring but the songs we can sing which nobody wants to hear sung;
Waiting to be flung in the end, on a heap less useful than dung."

You, have you built well, have you forgotten the corner-stone?
Talking of right relations of men, but not of relations of men to GOD.
"Our citizenship is in Heaven"; yes, but that is the model and type for your citizenship upon earth.

When your fathers fixed the place of GOD,
And settled all the inconvenient saints,
Apostles, martyrs, in a kind of Whipsnade,
Then they could set about imperial expansion
Accompanied by industrial development.
Exporting iron, coal and cotton goods
And intellectual enlightenment
And everything, including capital
And several versions of the Word of GOD:
The British race assured of a mission
Performed it, but left much at home unsure.

Of all that was done in the past, you eat the fruit, either rotten or ripe.
And the Church must be forever building, and always decaying, and always being restored.
For every ill deed in the past we suffer the consequence:
For sloth, for avarice, gluttony, neglect of the Word of GOD,
For pride, for lechery, treachery, for every act of sin.
And of all that was done that was good, you have the inheritance.

For good and ill deeds belong to a man alone, when he stands alone on the other side of death,
But here upon earth you have the reward of the good and ill that was done by those who have gone before you.
And all that is ill you may repair if you walk together in humble repentence, expiating the sins of your fathers;
And all that was good you must fight to keep with hearts as devoted as those of your fathers who fought to gain it.
The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without;
For this is the law of life; and you must remember that while there is time of prosperity
The people will neglect the Temple, and in time of adversity they will decry it.

What life have you if you have not life together?
There is no life that is not in community,
And no community not lived in praise of GOD.
Even the anchorite who meditates alone,
For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of GOD,
Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate.
And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads,
And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance,
But all dash to and fro in motor cars,
Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere.
Nor does the family even move about together,
But every son would have his motor cycle,
And daughters ride away on casual pillions.

Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore;
Let the work not delay, time and the arm not waste;

Let the clay be dug from the pit, let the saw cut the stone,
Let the fire not be quenched in the forge.

The lights fade out; when they come up again the church site is seen; the WORKMEN *are continuing their work on the foundations.*

ALFRED. Cor blimey, it 'ave been a sweat tryin' to get these foundations right. What they want to build a church on a bleedin' swamp like this for? Don't these parsons know that you can't build without somethin' to build on?

EDWIN. Parsons don't know anythink about buildin'. They think you can take any piece o' ground and do anythink with it.

ETHELBERT. Well, I don't know as I'd go so far as to say that, Ted, but you put me in mind of a parson I talked to once. I assumed that 'e knew a few facts, as you might say, till 'e up and asked me what was I goin' to do about the keystone for a arch! Didn't even know you *could* build a arch without a keystone! Then 'e started shoutin' about pointin', and I says as when I was pointin' up there, blowed if I didn't knock the Frenchman off the scaffoldin' and took a chip off the old stone saint underneath. Showed 'im the place. "But was 'e 'urt?" asked the old boy. "Oh no," says I, "just a little chip it was; that there Sussex marble is a 'ard stone." "No," he says, "I mean the Frenchman."

General laughter.

Fancy anyone not knowin' that a Frenchman's a pointin' tool!

ALFRED. Look 'ere, 'ere's the water got in again. This place is nothin' but a sponge, this is. These foundations ain't strong enough to set a egg-cup on.

Enter CONTRACTOR.

CONTRACTOR. Well, you don't seem to be doin' much good here. Can't you get on with it?

ALFRED. A little piece o' decent soil 'ud do us a fair treat. 'Ow can we make any 'eadway 'ere? It's got me beat.

CONTRACTOR. Well, I tell you what it is. If you can't get these foundations solid by the end o' the week, I'm going to tell the architect I must claim an extra, that's all.

ETHELBERT. And what'll the architect do then?

CONTRACTOR. Why, he'll go to the people that's puttin' up the money, and he'll say: "As I warned you," he'll say—and he did, I know that—"as I warned you, there will be an extra. The contractor has handed me an estimate," he'll say, "and I have checked it and found it correct. We'll need such and such a sum or the work can't go on."

ETHELBERT. But from what I 'ear, they 'aven't got any money over and above. In fact, they've started buildin' before they've done collectin' subscriptions, 'aven't they?

CONTRACTOR. Yes, they was in such a hurry to get a church built here.

ETHELBERT. Well, it don't look as if you could 'urry these foundations. It'll take more 'n my coaxin', anyway.

CONTRACTOR. If they haven't any contingency fund to draw on, that's their look-out. I dare say they'll get a bit more money, or they can make another appeal, or they can try to get a overdraft o' some kind, though a church don't make very good security, certainly not when it's in this state, and this piece o' ground ain't worth *that*.

ALFRED. Ground? You can't 'ardly call it ground.

EDWIN. Can't they save a bit on other things, like decorations an' stained glass windows an' gold plate on the altar an' such like?

ETHELBERT. They'll bloomin' well 'ave to do that. These foundations'll soak up money like this soil collects moisture. It'd 'ave saved 'em money in the end to 'ave put more of it into a good buildin' lot.

CONTRACTOR. Ah, but they wanted a church particular for this neighbourhood; and there wasn't any other piece

o' land round here available. Now I tell you what. Architects is difficult gentlemen, and I don't like to go and tell him what I said I would if I can help it; and besides, we know what the answer'll be: it'll just mean stoppin' construction for a indefinite period, durin' which this piece of land ain't going to improve any. I'll give it another whole week before I makes out the estimate for him. So meanwhile you put your backs into it, and try usin' your brains for once.

Exit

ALFRED. Coo!

ETHELBERT. Use me brains, indeed! If I 'ad as little brains as 'im I might be a contractor myself by now; but bein' a intellectual, I'm only a foreman.

All stand and brood despondently. (*Enter* RAHERE, *unobserved*)

ALFRED. Yes, but warn't they off the chump, them that thought you could build a church on this soil? Whatever made 'em think they 'ad to 'ave a church just 'ere?

EDWIN. Yes, why try to build a church in this place? It's only fit for allotments for growin' whelks and cockles in, this is.

ALFRED. Why do they need a church 'ere?

RAHERE. Because God needs a church here.

All turn round with a start and touch their caps in embarrassment.

ALFRED. Askin' your pardon, sir, didn't know as you was with us. Might you be the parson o' this 'ere church we're tryin' to build?

RAHERE. No, I was a monk in the time of King Henry.

EDWIN. King 'Enery? How come you to be 'ere now, then?

RAHERE. Because I also was a London builder, and I also built on marshy ground; and I also knew discouragement. Therefore, because you are building to the glory of God

and for His people, and because you are now at a loss to finish what you began, have I come to comfort and encourage you.

ALFRED. Might we 'ear a bit o' your story, sir?

EDWIN. And wot might be your name, sir?

RAHERE. My name is Rahere. I was a man of London born and bred like you. But God having endowed me with a ready wit, the power to provoke mirth and merriment in all men, this was the cause of my temptation. For I loved ease and luxury, and to make men pleased with me, and I loved courts and the company of the great. And to my mirth I joined the power of flattery, so that great men and princes loved to have me of their company. And so in time I came to frequent the Royal Court, and became indeed the King's Jester.

EDWIN. What's a jester?

ALFRED. You ought to be ashamed, young Ted, showin' your ignorance by interruptin' the gentleman with questions o' that sort. You ought to know a jester's a man what comes on and does the comic turn. . . .

EDWIN. Oh, like George Robey.

ALFRED. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Ted, to liken this gentleman to George Robey. Robey's on the 'alls; but this gentleman's meanin' is as 'ow 'e used to hentertain the toffs, at Buckin'ham Palace and such like.

EDWIN. Askin' your pardon, didn't mean no offence. Please go on, sir.

RAHERE. In this way I spent the years of my youth. But God, who has performed so many and marvellous miracles of mercy, and who in His good time does often choose the foolish and weak to be his instruments, thought fit to reveal to me the error of my ways. And thus He sent me forth in penitence to Rome.

EDWIN. I can't see as 'ow you'd done anything so wicked as all that, to be sent to Rome.

ALFRED. You ought to be ashamed, Ted, breakin' in with crude remarks like that. 'E means, God wanted 'im to live a 'oly life, so 'E sent 'im to Rome where the Pope lives. Quite right and proper, I says.

RAHERE. And while I dwelt in Rome I was suddenly vexed with a grievous sickness.

EDWIN. I 'eard tell the drinkin' water ain't none too good in foreign parts. Not like our London water.

ALFRED. Ted, if you don't shut up, I'll ask Bert to give you a tellin' off.

RAHERE. My sickness was near to death, and in my extremity I made a vow, that if God gave me health to return to my own dear country, then would I build a hospital for the restoration of poor men. So by God's Grace casting off my sickness and becoming whole, I fared home bent upon the fulfilment of my vow. And while I was accomplishing my journey, I had a vision, full at once of terror and of sweetness.

EDWIN. What's a vision?

ALFRED. 'E means 'e 'ad a dream, Ted.

EDWIN. Oh, a dream. I'd like to 'ear your dream, sir.

RAHERE. While I was refreshing my limbs with rest, after the ardours of the day in travel, it seemed that I was borne on high by a beast having four feet and two wings, and set on a high place, which seemed to me of greatest peril. Then saw I one beside me of great beauty and majesty, who said: "I am Bartholomew, an apostle of Jesus Christ, who am come to help thee. By the will of Heaven, I have chosen a spot at Smithfield in London, where in my name thou shalt found a church. And have no fear concerning the expenses of this building; but apply diligence; mine it shall be to provide the costs."

ALFRED. I know what you're talkin' about, sir; you mean St. Bartholomew's Church and Bart's Hospital down by the General Post Office there. Go on, sir!

RAHERE. So I came to London; and God inclined the King's heart toward my work, and I began to build the church.

EDWIN. And did *you* 'ave trouble gettin' the foundations right?

RAHERE. I did. But for the bidding of St. Bartholomew, had I liever chosen any part of London rather than that. For in those days it was a marshy ground, abounding in filth and muddy water; a place so vile that the part that was not water was used only for the hanging of thieves.

ALFRED. Well, I must say, sir, you did 'ave everythink against you! And 'ow did you come off for money for the buildin'?

RAHERE. That too was lacking. For to find means to pursue the work, at times I had to return to my old trick of jester, not to lords and princes, but to amuse servants and even children.

EDWIN. That *was* 'ard lines, sir. I think those rich people what you used to know might 'ave 'elped you. But you got it built! I know that, 'cause it's there now! Well done, sir!

ETHELBERT. Ah, but 'ow's all this goin' to 'elp on the present occasion, sir? You see 'ow it is. Here's a lot o' people given their money for buildin' a church, on a spot as unsuitable as can be, because they say a church is needed 'ere, there bein' none handy, and a crowded neighbourhood full o' poor people, and no other spot available. There wasn't none other as they could buy; and I guess they only got this 'ere because it wasn't no good for nothink else. Times 'as changed since your day, and there ain't much 'oliness about, seemin'ly; if we're better off in some ways, may be we're worse in others. It ain't so much that we'll lose the job, but bein' on account of these poor folks as 'ave set their 'eart on 'avin' a church 'ere. What can we do? We're in a proper fix, sir!

RAHERE. If you will have faith, we will help you. Those who helped me, both visible and invisible, shall help you. If you will have faith, all the angels and saints of God shall pray for you, and your work shall be blessed. Ethelbert, Alfred and Edwin——

As he names them they twitch off their caps and kneel

in the name of God, who knoweth all your faults, even the slightest unworthy desire of your hearts, arise and proceed to your work, for here are those who shall help you.

VOICES OF RAHERE'S MEN, *entering at the back.*

Ethelbert, Alfred, Edwin,
with all those who give their hand to this work,
we shall work with you,
we shall stand beside you,
for a moment visible and again invisible,
until your foundations are made firm,
until your walls are built and your rooftree set,
until the altar is dressed, and the sanctuary;
until the dedication of your church.

Above, RAHERE *and his men dig and build; below, the bricklayers resume their tasks with a will. After a time, "Blessed City, Heavenly Salem" is heard being sung in the distance; a procession approaches to lay the Foundation Stone of the new church.*

As the lights fade out on this, the Builders' Song is heard.

Shall arms hang straight
With fingers unbent
While voices debate
Of money misspent
And the coverless bed
And the fireless grate
And the lamp unfed?
How late shall we wait?

A Church for us all and work for us all and God's world for us all even unto this last.

Lights up again on the CHORUS.

CHORUS.

The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying:
O miserable cities of designing men,
O wretched generation of enlightened men,
Betrayed in the mazes of your ingenuities,
Sold by the proceeds of your proper inventions:
I have given you hands which you turn from worship,
I have given you speech, for endless palaver,
I have given you my Law, and you set up commissions,
I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,
I have given you hearts, for reciprocal distrust.
I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.
Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,
Many desire to see their names in print,
Many read nothing but the race reports.
Much is your reading, but not the Word of GOD,
Much is your building, but not the House of GOD.
Will you build me a house of plaster, with corrugated roofing,
To be filled with a litter of Sunday newspapers?

1ST MALE VOICE.

A Cry from the East:
What shall be done to the shore of smoky ships?
Will you leave my people forgetful and forgotten
To idleness, labour, and delirious stupor?
There shall be left the broken chimney,
The peeled hull, a pile of rusty iron,
In a street of scattered brick where the goat climbs,
Where My Word is unspoken.

2ND MALE VOICE.

A Cry from the North, from the West and from the South:
Whence thousands travel daily to the timekept City;
Where My Word is unspoken,
In the land of lobelias and tennis flannels
The rabbit shall burrow and the thorn revisit,
The nettle shall flourish on the gravel court,
And the wind shall say: "Here were decent godless people:
Their only monument the asphalt road
And a thousand lost golf balls."

CHORUS.

We build in vain unless the LORD build with us.
Can you keep the City that the LORD keeps not with you?
A thousand policemen directing the traffic
Cannot tell you why you come or where you go.
A colony of cavies or a horde of active marmots
Build better than they that build without the LORD.
Shall we lift up our feet among perpetual ruins?
I have loved the beauty of Thy House, the peace of Thy sanctuary,
I have swept the floors and garnished the altars.
Where there is no temple there shall be no homes,
Though you have shelters and institutions,
Precarious lodgings while the rent is paid,
Subsiding basements where the rat breeds
Or sanitary dwellings with numbered doors
Or a house a little better than your neighbour's;
When the Stranger says: "What is the meaning of this city?
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?"
What will you answer? "We all dwell together

To make money from each other"? or "This is a community"?
And the Stranger will depart and return to the desert.
O my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger,
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions.

O weariness of men who turn from GOD
To the grandeur of your mind and the glory of your action,
To arts and inventions and daring enterprises,
To schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited,
Binding the earth and the water to your service,
Exploiting the seas and developing the mountains,
Dividing the stars into common and preferred,
Engaged in devising the perfect refrigerator,
Engaged in working out a rational morality,
Engaged in printing as many books as possible,
Plotting of happiness and flinging empty bottles,
Turning from your vacancy to fevered enthusiasm
For nation or race or what you call humanity;
Though you forget the way to the Temple,
There is one who remembers the way to your door:
Life you may evade, but Death you shall not.
You shall not deny the Stranger.

On the fore-stage, an AGITATOR *is addressing a tattered crowd.*

AGITATOR. Friends, I want your attention for a moment. Do you see that buildin' that's goin' up over there? Do you know what it is? Do you think they're puttin' up decent 'abitations for people like you 'n me? Not much o' that and then somethink less. That's a church, that is. And what's a church, you ask's. It's a place where they practises a degradin' and outworn superstition, an abomination what ought to be swept off the face o' the earth, in what they call these enlightened times. Did you ever 'ear o' Darwin?

Well, 'e was a scientific bloke what lived more 'n a hundred years ago, more 'n a hundred years ago, mind you, and 'e showed up the 'ole blightin' swindle as I can prove 'ere by this book which is published by the Rationalist Press Association for the price of one shillin'. Have you read it? No! and why not? 'Cause the people what's in power keeps you short o' cash o' purpose, so as you shan't be able to buy books what tells you the truth. These parsons would prevent you from learnin' to read an' write if they could. There's a 'ole 'ierarchy of 'em, livin' off your sweat, as you might say; puttin' up churches instead o' 'ousin'; and if you goes inside, which I 'opes you never does nor will, there they takes more money from you for to watch 'em at their monkey tricks. And there ain't one of 'em, from bishops down, and you can take my word for it, as doesn't 'ave 'is bottle o' port wine every night and 'is grouse in season. And yet there's men o' your own class workin' to put up that 'ouse o' sin. If you was 'arf like free men you wouldn't let 'em do it!

He leads them to where ETHELBERT, ALFRED *and* EDWIN *are at work on half-built walls.*

ALFRED. Now, mate, what do you want? Ain't lookin' for a job, are you?

AGITATOR. Comrades, I come to tell you, man to man, that you are betrayin' your class and the workers of the world, by prostitutin' yourselves by lendin' your labour towards buildin' a church. [*To* ALFRED] Call yourself a man?

ALFRED. Well, if I do, what 'ave you got to say about it?

AGITATOR. Lay down your tools and refuse to work on a buildin' which is only for the purpose o' dopin' the workers.

ALFRED. Oh, I see what your game is. Ain't got a job yourself so you want to twist us out o' ours. All I 'ave to

say to you, mate, is: [*moving towards him*] You're a ruddy Nosey Parker. You 'op it.

ETHELBERT. 'Arf a mo', leave 'im to me, Fred. 'Ave a fag? [*to* AGITATOR]. Got a match? Thanks. I know 'ow to talk to 'im. I don't suppose 'e's even 'eard o' the principles o' Credit Reform. Now then, boy, you give us a few o' your valuable opinions. What's your view o' Maynard Keynes's theory o' money?

AGITATOR. Keynes? 'E's the 'ead of a bank or somethink, ain't 'e? He's a interested party, so whatever 'e says don't count.

ETHELBERT. Well, ain't you 'n me interested parties, if it come to that?

AGITATOR. And what are you defendin' Keynes for, anyway? Is 'e payin' you for it?

ETHELBERT. Oh, I ain't defendin' nobody. I'm just askin' questions. Probin' of your mind, such as it is.

AGITATOR. What's that?

ETHELBERT. I say I'm a-probin' of your mind, what there is of it.

AGITATOR. Keynes indeed! I tell you, it's your Keynes's and your Montagoo Normans and such like, they're the blokes what keeps the yoke o' religion on the shoulders o' the workin' man; and they 'as their own nefarious reasons for it, you may be sure.

ETHELBERT. Well, that's a idea, that is. That takes a bit o' thinkin' out, that do, and no mistake.

AGITATOR. And what's more, I shouldn't be surprised if it was your Keynes, or your Norman, or one o' them blokes, as was the 'idden 'and as is puttin' up the money for this church you're buildin'.

ETHELBERT. Not this 'ere church. I 'appens to know. Some other church, p'raps.

AGITATOR. You a manooal labourer and refuse to stand by your own class?

ALFRED AND EDWIN. What's that? Us manual labourers?

ALFRED. It's a shame to allow you to show your ignorance, old son. Us manual labourers? We're bricklayers, as you'd see for yourself if you wasn't stone-blind.

EDWIN. Go and talk to the fellows as casts up figures in offices, they're manual labourers if you like. We're *brain* workers, we are. As for you, you're nothin' but a *lung* worker.

ETHELBERT. But what's your objection to the buildin' o' churches, apart from they bein' a outworn superstition?

AGITATOR. Why, it's plain as the nose on your face. Ain't all this money and labour and material bein' diverted from its rightful purpose o' providin' decent 'omes for the workers?

ETHELBERT. Ah, there you are. I knew you ad'ered to some antiquated theory of money. So you think that buildin' more churches means buildin' fewer 'ouses and flats, does you?

AGITATOR. O' course it does.

ETHELBERT. Now, wait a minute. I'm tellin' you, mate. Deny if you can as there's enough clay and lime and tools and men to build all the 'ouses that's needed in this country, and all the churches too? Well, that bein' the case, I say: *to 'ell with money!* You can arrange the convenience o' money so's to get these things. That's as plain as the nose on *your* face. But that ain't my job. I'm a specialist. I'm proud and 'appy to be buildin' a wall as *you'll* never see the inside of; I've got this trowel in one 'and and I've got me fist in the other, so *you be off.*

One or two of the CROWD *make threatening noises in reply; voices are raised and a scuffle is developing, when a* POLICEMAN'S *whistle is heard. The* CROWD *go off as the lights fade.*

CHORUS LEADER.

There are those who would build the Temple,
And those who prefer that the Temple should not be built.
In the days of Nehemiah the Prophet
There was no exception to the general rule.
In Shushan the palace, in the month Nisan,
He served the wine to the King Artaxerxes,
And he grieved for the broken city, Jerusalem;
And the King gave him leave to depart
That he might rebuild the city.
So he went, with a few, to Jerusalem,
And there, by the dragon's well, by the dung gate,
By the fountain gate, by the king's pool,
Jerusalem lay waste, consumed with fire;
No place for a beast to pass.
There were enemies without to destroy him,
And spies and self-seekers within,
When he and his men laid their hands to rebuilding the wall.
So they built as men must build
With the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other.

Curtains open, to discover ISRAELITES *rebuilding Jerusalem. To them enter* TWO *or* THREE WOMEN.

1ST WOMAN. Have the enemy been seen?

1ST MAN. No, but we watch lest they light upon us as the dew falleth on the ground.

2ND WOMAN. They may come before the wall is builded; and then will they destroy us utterly.

1ST MAN. Do you know what Sanballat said, when he heard we were building the wall? He mocked the Jews, and he spake to his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said: What do these foolish Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?

2ND MAN. And Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said: Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall.

ALL *falling on their knees:*

Hear, O our GOD; for we are despised; and turn back their reproach upon their own head, and give them up to spoiling in a land of captivity; and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. Hear, O our GOD.

Enter NEHEMIAH *with more* MEN.

NEHEMIAH. Be ye not afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses. Now our enemies know that their counsels are known to us, and that GOD hath brought them to naught. Therefore every man must be at his work. It shall be done thus: half shall toil in the work, and half shall hold the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail. And the builders shall have every one his sword girded by his side, and with one hand hold his weapon, and with the other work. And as the work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another; therefore in what place soever ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us; our GOD shall fight for us.

Enter an ISRAELITE

ISRAELITE. O Nehemiah, here are again two messengers sent by Sanballat.

NEHEMIAH. Let them enter.

Enter TWO MESSENGERS.

NEHEMIAH. Four times has Sanballat sent to me, saying: Let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. And four times have I replied saying: I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you? If you bring the same message, you may take the same answer.

MESSENGER. Sir, we have here a letter to you from Sanballat.

NEHEMIAH [*to* ISRAELITE]. Do thou read it aloud.

ISRAELITE [*reading*]. "It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel; for which cause thou buildest the wall; and thou wouldst be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying: There is a king in Judah; and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together."

NEHEMIAH. Return now to your master, and say: There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

Exeunt MESSENGERS

They send thus to make us afraid; and they think that our hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. But now, O God, strengthen thou my hands.

Stands for a moment in prayer, then starts to go out. Meets SHEMAIAH.

Shemaiah! what wouldst thou?

SHEMAIAH [*confidentially*]. Nehemiah! let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee, yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.

NEHEMIAH. Should such a man as I flee? And who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

SHEMAIAH. Nay, but, Nehemiah——

NEHEMIAH. Have done and be gone. I will not listen.

Exit SHEMAIAH

[*Solus*] I discern his purpose. God hath not sent him; but he pronounced this prophecy against me: and Tobiah and Sanballat have hired him, that I might be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

Exit NEHEMIAH. *Work proceeds for a few moments.* SENTRY *appears to descry enemies on the plain.*

WOMEN. Do they come? They come?

NEHEMIAH [*off-stage*] Sound the trumpet!

Trumpet sounds. All grasp arms and look out, ready to join the rest wherever the attack may be. Re-enter NEHEMIAH.

VOICES [*dispersedly*] They attack! No, they stay! They see we are ready for them. They see that they are not many enough to be sure of victory. They retire!

NEHEMIAH. Praise, praise unto God!

Others join in rejoicing as the lights fade.

CHORUS.

O Lord, deliver me from the man of excellent intention and impure heart: for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian: were doubtless men of public spirit and zeal.

Preserve me from the enemy who has something to gain: and from the friend who has something to lose.

Remembering the words of Nehemiah the Prophet: "The trowel in hand, and the gun rather loose in the holster."

Those who sit in a house of which the use is forgotten: are like snakes that lie on mouldering stairs, content in the sunlight.

And the others run about like dogs, full of enterprise, sniffing and barking: they say, "This house is a nest of serpents, let us destroy it,

And have done with these abominations, the turpitudes of the Christians." And these are not justified, nor the others.

And they write innumerable books; being too vain and distracted for silence: seeking every one after his own elevation, and dodging his emptiness.

If humility and purity be not in the heart, they are not in the home: and if they are not in the home, they are not in the City.

The man who has builded during the day would return to his hearth at nightfall: to be blessed with the gift of silence, and doze before he sleeps.

But we are encompassed with snakes and dogs: therefore some must labour, and others must hold the spears.

On the fore-stage, re-enter AGITATOR *followed by* CROWD. *He turns and addresses them.*

AGITATOR. You see, comrades, it's no sort o' use talkin' to men like that what is the willin' dupes o capitalism. I could 'a answered 'im, but what's the use? He's too old and too ignorant. What we got to do is to happeal to the young and 'opeful, them what 'as fresh vitality and 'as got vision, like you 'ere. When we seizes the power we must make it a law that nobody teaches religion to anyone under the age o' eighteen. That's what they do in Russia. Ever 'ear o' the Comsomol? We'll turn all the churches into workers'

clubs, and museums, and everythink useful for the people: dance 'alls, picture palaces, swimmin' baths, smokin' concerts, restaurants where you can get all the cups o' coffee you want for a 'apenny and sausage and mashed or toad-in-the-'ole for twopence. We'll all be free and we'll all think alike, as a free people does; and them that don't won't be allowed to think different.

Tumultuous applause.

A VOICE. You talk very pretty, mate, but what we goin' to do about it?

ANOTHER. That's right! What we wants is *action*, I says, *action*.

A THIRD. Commúnism in our time!

AGITATOR. What're we to do, you asks? Why, friends, there's no end to what you can do. F'r instance, on Christmas Day we can organize a Anti-God procession, same as they does in Russia, with playcards an' ex'ibitions exposin' all the dope o' Christianity an' turnin' it to ridicule.

A VOICE [*Lancs.*]. Ay, lad, but it's a long way to Christmas yet.

ANOTHER. You ain't even 'ad your summer 'olidays yet! Tell us what to do about it *now*, see, *now*!

ANOTHER. That's what I says. *Action* is what we wants, I says, *action*.

AGITATOR. Well, every time as you can see your way to 'eavin' a brick through one o' their stained glass windows what is pure idolatry an' worshippin' o' graven images, you'll be doin' a service to 'umanity.

A VOICE. An' be pinched for it. I just done me stretch.

AGITATOR. Well, I'll tell you what you can do right now, see? Sabotagin'! that's the word. As soon as them soulless an' 'eartless workmen as is so pig-'eaded 'as knocked off for the night, an' everythin' is quiet, you go an' mess the place up as much as you can. Break up the bricks, muck up the

mortar, and shove over the walls where they ain't set yet. That'll 'elp to show 'em we're in earnest!

Exeunt CROWD *tumultuously with cheers. The curtains open.*

DANISH INVASION

*Lights up on an empty stage—music far off—*NUNS, *fearful of the* DANES *coming, carry their treasures to hiding places; some are stopped by* DANES *who seize their precious relic and kill one of them. The others weep and pray over her body.* MONKS *come to them bearing a Crucifix. The* DANES, *returning in force, hesitate as the* MONKS *stand still and unresisting across their path; eventually they attack and kill some of them, but dare not touch the Crucifix.*

CHORUS.
It is hard for those who have never known persecution,
And who have never known a Christian,
To believe these tales of Christian persecution.
It is hard for those who live near a Bank
To doubt the security of their money.
It is hard for those who live near a Police Station,
To believe in the triumph of violence.
Do you think that the Faith has conquered the World
And that lions no longer need keepers?
Do you need to be told that whatever has been, can still be?
Do you need to be told that even such modest attainments
As you can boast in the way of polite society
Will hardly survive the Faith to which they owe their significance?
Men! polish your teeth on rising and retiring;
Women! polish your fingernails:

You polish the tooth of the dog and the talon of the cat.
Why should men love the Church? Why should they love her laws?
She tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they would forget.
She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where they like to be soft.
She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant facts.
They constantly try to escape
From the darkness outside and within
By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good.
But the man that is will shadow
The man that pretends to be.
And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all,
The blood of the martyrs not shed once for all,
The lives of the Saints not given once for all:
But the Son of Man is crucified always
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints.
And if blood of Martyrs is to flow on the steps
We must first build the steps;
And if the Temple is to be cast down
We must first build the Temple.

But come, let us not lose hope in the world, prematurely;
The world is not quite given up to diplomacy,
Combinations and finding of formulas.
There are always the young, the devoted,
The enthusiasts, breakers of fetters.
And some such I now see approaching
With aloft their gay banner of sunrise.

Enter REDSHIRTS *in military formation.*
O you who thus intrude upon a house of sorrow,
Your looks are horrid, but your hearts no doubt are pure.

Bring you some succour for our failing strength?
Bring you some light to lead our faltering steps?
Brooding on backward time, abysmal future,
Outward oppression and within betrayal,
We beg some word of comfort and assurance.

REDSHIRTS [*in unison, with military gestures*].
Our verse
is free
as the wind on the steppes
as love in the heart of the factory worker
thousands and thousands of steppes
millions and millions of workers
all working
all loving
in the cities
on the steppes
production has risen by twenty point six per cent
we can laugh at God!
our workers
all working
our turbines
all turning
our sparrows
all chirping
all denounce you, deceivers of the people!

CHORUS.
Alas! there is no help here.
Yet they are young, with fairly intelligent faces.
O Jesus, Saviour of Man, preserve us
From Man, the Saviour of Man,
The Saviour who destroys Man in Men.
But who come now, approaching from our right?
Shall these avail us?

The right of some is the left of others,
The right of some is the wrong of others,
It is best to suspend judgment.

Enter BLACKSHIRTS, *in military formation.*

BLACKSHIRTS [*saluting*]. *Hail!*
We come as a boon and a blessing to all,
Though we'd rather appear in the Albert Hall.
Our methods are new in this land of the free,
We make the deaf hear and we make the blind see.
We're law-keeping fellows who make our own laws——
And we welcome SUBSCRIPTIONS IN AID OF THE CAUSE!

Hold out collection tins.

MALE CHORUS.
Friends, kindly solve the riddles in your speech:
Are you obedient to the Law of GOD?
Are you with those who reverence the Temple?

BLACKSHIRTS.
Your vesture, your gesture, your speech and your face,
Proclaim your extraction from Jewish race.
We have our own prophets, who're ready to speak
For a week and a day and a day and a week.
This being the case, we must firmly refuse
To descend to palaver with anthropoid Jews.

CHORUS.
There seems no hope from those who march in step,
We have no help from those with new evangels.
Is there yet hope from those who hold the world,
From those who have the glory and the power?
And here comes one who has a noble seeming,
Experienced, wise, a man of balanced judgment:
And him will we accost.

Enter PLUTOCRAT. *During this and the following speech other* PLUTOCRATS, FLASH LADIES, GUNMEN *and other shady and rapacious individualists getting lower and lower in class, enter, until the stage is pretty full. As he enters,* BLACKSHIRTS *hold out tins again, and he drops a penny in each.*

Stranger! if strange you are, for yet I think
I have a sad acquaintance with your face.
Are you among the loyal to the Faith?
Are you among the children of the Church,
Prepared for sacrifice and suffering?

PLUTOCRAT [*very suavely*].
Let me assure you, first of all,
I have a great respect for Mother Church.
She is the bulwark of society,
The great maintainer of stability.
Her ceremonies, too, are very fine.
Most impressive, most impressive.
For Church and State and Liberty I stand.
I wish to reassure you on this point,
Lest otherwise you fail to understand
The trifling criticisms that I make
Wholly inspired by the wish to help you.
It grieves me very much to have to say this——
Yet I must say, in humble charity,
The Church is most oppressive to the poor.

Cheers from REDSHIRTS

I feel that I am qualified to speak,
Having been active in philanthropy;
For any man who makes a million pounds
Has done at least a million pounds of good.
Some clergymen are grossly overpaid;
You are extortionate in rents and tithes;

Cheers from BLACKSHIRTS

And then the Ecclesiastical Commission
Might be reformed. These seem small points, I know;
But there's one grievance that *must* be put right——
And one that I have suffered from myself——
You must make some concessions towards divorce,

Cheers from ALL

Though, mind you, I don't want divorce made cheap—
That cheapens marriage. Yet, when all is said,
I think the Church an excellent institution.
You don't mind such frank speaking, do you now?
From one who has so much goodwill as I.

CHORUS.

There is no help in parties, none in interests,
There is no help in those whose souls are choked and swaddled
In the old winding sheets of place and power
Or the new winding sheets of mass-made thought.
O world! forget your glories and your quarrels,
Forget your groups and your misplaced ambitions,
We speak to you as individual men;
As individuals alone with GOD.
Alone with GOD, you first learn brotherhood with men.

CROWD *grumbles and mutters, rising to a sullen roar, and manifests disapproval.*

PLUTOCRAT [*in a conciliatory manner*].
I have here an alternative to offer,
Hoping it will commend itself to all.
For after all, we're all at heart agreed;
The things we want are really all the same.
So why not try to find a formula?
And I, who am the soul of moderation,
And earnest spirit of conciliation,

Have been exploring every avenue
To find the terms on which we can agree.
We all, I know, have various interests,
And there's the Church to be considered too.
So I have had a little image cast,
And I must say, you'll find it very neat,
Something I'm sure that all of you will like.
It looks like Gold, but its real name is POWER.

Enter at back, FLUNKEYS *bearing the* GOLDEN CALF. ALL *cheer uproariously and kneel for a moment. Then rise and begin to push and shove and pursue the image across stage. Fall to struggling with each other indiscriminately. The calf is dismembered. Exeunt in tumult.*

The lights fade. In the dimness ETHELBERT'S *voice is heard.*

ETHELBERT. O Gawd! O Gawd! Ain't we got *everythink* against us, tryin' to get this church built! O Lord, help us!

Suddenly the ROCK *is observed standing brooding on the pinnacle.*

THE ROCK.

I have known two worlds, I have known two worlds of death.
All that you suffer, I have suffered before,
And suffer always, even to the end of the world.
Does the spring change, does the bird's wing change, does the fly alter
Its purpose since the amber-time, the old time?
There shall be always the Church and the World
And the Heart of Man
Shivering and fluttering between them, choosing and chosen,
Valiant, ignoble, dark and full of light
Swinging between Hell Gate and Heaven Gate.

And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.
Darkness now, then
Light.

Light.

END OF PART I

PART II

CHORUS.

In the beginning GOD created the world. Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And when there were men, in their various ways, they struggled in torment towards GOD

Blindly and vainly, for man is a vain thing, and man without GOD is a seed upon the wind: driven this way and that, and finding no place of lodgement and germination.

They followed the light and the shadow, and the light led them forward to light and the shadow led them to darkness,

Worshipping snakes or trees, worshipping devils rather than nothing: crying for life beyond life, for ecstasy not of the flesh.

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit moved upon the face of the water.

And men who turned towards the light and were known of the light

Invented the Higher Religions; and the Higher Religions were good

And led men from light to light, to knowledge of Good and Evil.

But their light was ever surrounded and shot with darkness

As the air of temperate seas is pierced by the still dead
breath of the Arctic Current;
And they came to an end, a dead end stirred with a
flicker of life,
And they came to the withered ancient look of a child
that has died of starvation.
Prayer wheels, worship of the dead, denial of this world,
affirmation of rites with forgotten meanings
In the restless wind-whipped sand, or the hills where
the wind will not let the snow rest.
Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the
face of the deep.

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in
time and of time,
A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call
history; transecting, bisecting the world of time, a
moment in time but not like a moment of time,
A moment in time but time was made through that
moment: for without the meaning there is no time,
and that moment of time gave the meaning.
Then it seemed as if men must proceed from light to
light, in the light of the Word,
Through the Passion and Sacrifice saved in spite of their
negative being;
Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always
before, selfish and purblind as ever before,
Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always
resuming their march on the way that was lit by the
light;
Often halting, loitering, straying, delaying, returning,
yet following no other way.

But it seems that something has happened that has never
happened before: though we know not just when,
or why, or how, or where.

Men have left GOD not for other gods, they say, but for
no god; and this has never happened before
That men both deny gods and worship gods, professing
first Reason,
And then Money, and Power, and what they call Life,
or Race, or Dialectic.
The Church disowned, the tower overthrown, the bells
upturned, what have we to do
But stand with empty hands and palms turned upwards
In an age which advances progressively backwards?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED [*afar off*].
In this land
There shall be one cigarette to two men,
To two women one half pint of bitter
Ale. . . .

CHORUS.
What does the world say, does the whole world stray in
high-powered cars on a by-pass way?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED [*more faintly*].
In this land
No man has hired us. . . .

CHORUS.
Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the
face of the deep.
Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind failed
the Church?
When the Church is no longer regarded, not even
opposed, and men have forgotten
All gods except Usury, Lust and Power.

Enter THE ROCK, *with his cowl flung back.*

THE ROCK.
O faint-hearted, and easily unsettled, and easily lost
In the blinding movement of time, sinking and borne away;
Remember, all you who are numbered for GOD,
In every moment of time you live where two worlds cross,
In every moment you live at a point of intersection,
Remember, living in time, you must live also now in Eternity.

CHORUS LEADER.
Not for ourselves we mourn, O Rock, but for the unborn,
We hear the wailing of souls that are not yet conceived, of parents and grandparents still to be born.

THE ROCK.
These also may lament the future, as you now lament.
But with them too shall I stand, with them in due season.

CHORUS LEADER.
But is there no hope for them, beyond what our eyes have beheld?

THE ROCK.
I have said, take no thought of the harvest, but only of proper sowing.

CHORUS LEADER.
Your words are hard, O Rock, and of bitter consolation.

THE ROCK.
Did HE promise the peace of this world to the children of light?

But come, you must put your thoughts once more to this season of sowing,
So with much pain shall you see Eternity crossing the current of time.
I send you now one who accomplished much, in a time of drought and desolation:
Blomfield, Bishop of London,
Builder of many churches;
One who was usually right,
And never intimidated, never disheartened;
Displaying equal justice
In the time of the great-grandfathers
Of those who are here sitting silent;
Blomfield who built in a time which was no better time than this.

THE ROCK *is no longer seen.* BLOMFIELD *enters, briskly.*

CHORUS LEADER.
Blomfield, Bishop of London,
Do you bring us any encouragement?
Seeing that the times are evil,
Of many theories, and of evil practice,
When the great sit helpless in their seats,
And the humble stand helpless at corners.

BLOMFIELD. I think that you are needlessly despondent about the prospects of the Church in this time, and in this diocese. When I came to London, I found a situation of much smaller compass, it is true, but fully as unhopeful as that of to-day.

CHORUS LEADER. Your words are hard to believe, though we do not dispute you.

BLOMFIELD. They are true. The upper classes were indifferent, and pagan in their behaviour; the middle classes were complacent, and self-righteous in their behaviour;

and the lower classes were destitute of the most rudimentary Christian education. As for the clergy. . . .

CHORUS LEADER. Inform us, O Bishop.

BLOMFIELD. Some I had occasion to reprimand—to put the matter delicately—for laxity of manners and low standards of austerity; others I had to reprimand for preaching in conventicles.

CHORUS LEADER. But were not the people, both great and small, more ready to hear the Word of God than now? Did not the wealthy care more for the Faith, and did not the learned preach only the truth delivered to the saints and deposited in the Church?

BLOMFIELD. Indeed! there were powerful anti-Christian influences in the highest places. There was a party in the country bent upon destroying its best and dearest institutions, constantly at work undermining the Church, and through the Church attacking the Monarchy. People active in educational reform were preaching something they called *neutrality in religion*! nothing less than treason against the truth! Monstrous.

CHORUS LEADER. But the poor, did they not still hold the Faith?

BLOMFIELD. As for that, I found extensive districts with no churches to serve them; and when I set about to build churches, what was I told? I was told that the new churches were only half filled! as if a church was run like a theatre! People said that the spiritually destitute, for whom those churches were built, refused to take advantage of them. This accusation was by no means true; but even if it were, what did men expect? In neighbourhoods where the people have had almost no pastoral superintendence, or religious instruction of any kind, and where their physical and social condition is mostly on the same level as their spiritual, would it not be miraculous if they *did* want churches? I had to persuade doubters that our work in such

places, urban and suburban, must be *missionary* work.

CHORUS LEADER. And what instruction had the children? Was there teaching, religious and secular?

BLOMFIELD. I had to look to that too. In the places where the people had so far lost the Faith as to be incapable of teaching their children, I was careful to supply *schools* as well as churches; and if we could not supply both, then the school first and the church afterwards. *My* schools were intended to train up a congregation for the church. Remember that I was in almost daily contact with masses of my fellow creatures living without God in the world!

CHORUS LEADER. You speak to good purpose, O Father. Yet now is much need, and little money. Not only for armament, in ceaseless fear of wars; not only for secular education. But also for worthier purposes; men say, they must see that all are fed and housed, and they say that there is no money for building churches.

BLOMFIELD. It was not easy in my time. It will not be easy now. Yet I saw built two hundred churches; and you ask for less than a quarter of that number. All things that are for good, work together. There is plenty of building material, you may be sure. There must be many more workmen, or men anxious for work, than there were in my time, and men have mechanical devices to-day such as we never dreamed of. Men must not prate of economic laws which are half superstition, just as superstition is half fear. Do they not understand that a few men of principle and conviction can accomplish what men without principle and conviction deem impossible?

CHORUS LEADER. What example do you hold before us?

BLOMFIELD. Remember the Crusades! both in their glory and in their shame. Remember that the Crusades were set in motion by a few such men, that they accomplished what they set out to do, to win the Sepulchre of Our Lord and the Holy Places for Christendom; and

remember that the results were botched by the ordinary deadly sins of ordinary men like the mass of men living to-day. And so I leave you.

Exit.

CHORUS.
O Father, we welcome your words,
And we will take heart for the future,
Remembering the past.

The heathen are come into thine inheritance,
And thy temple have they defiled.

Who is this that cometh from Edom?

He has trodden the wine-press alone.

There came one who spoke of the shame of Jerusalem
And the holy places defiled;
Pêter the Hermit, scourging with words.
And among his hearers were a few good men,
Many who were evil,
And most who were neither.
Like all men in all places,

Some went from love of glory,
Some went who were restless and curious,
Some were rapacious and lustful.
Many left their bodies to the kites of Syria
Or sea-strewn along the routes;
Many left their souls in Syria,
Living on, sunken in moral corruption;
Many came back well broken,
Diseased and beggared, finding
A stranger at the door in possession:

Came home cracked by the sun of the East
And the seven deadly sins in Syria.

But our King did well at Acre.
And in spite of all the dishonour,
The broken standards, the broken lives,
The broken faith in one place or another,
There was something left that was more than the tales
Of old men on winter evenings.
Only the faith could have done what was good of it,
Whole faith of a few,
Part faith of many.
Not avarice, lechery, treachery,
Envy, sloth, gluttony, jealousy, pride:
It was not these that made the Crusades,
But these that unmade them.

Remember the faith that took men from home
At the call of a wandering preacher.
Our age is an age of moderate virtue
And of moderate vice
When men will not lay down the Cross
Because they will never assume it.
Yet nothing is impossible, nothing,
To men of faith and conviction.
Let us therefore make perfect our will.
O GOD, help us.

The curtains close. Enter in front of them a YOUNG MAN, *of the time of Richard Cœur de Lion, who is about to take the Cross. He is followed by his sweetheart.*

YOUNG WOMAN. Ralph! Ralph! before it is too late, before you take the Cross. O please consider again. There are so many who want to go, so many with nothing to keep them at home! Why should you, of all men, be among the first to go?

YOUNG MAN. Because that is the greater honour. I have told you, this is a Holy War. It is not like other wars. Honour demands this sacrifice of us. The bishops have appealed for men. And our King himself will be there. And there is the Holy Sepulchre to be won. And all who go are promised remission of their sins.

YOUNG WOMAN. But, Ralph, you haven't committed any sins that matter. . . . And we were to have been married so soon. Life was going to be so lovely, until you went and listened to that preacher. And how will your father manage without you? He is growing old, you know.

YOUNG MAN. He has other sons growing up, who will soon be able to help him. I have given my word that I would go. I have promised to take the Cross! You must not make me late.

YOUNG WOMAN. But, Ralph, you may be gone a long time. You are going a long long way. I shall be an old woman by the time you get back.

YOUNG MAN. Nonsense, dearest. The war will be over in six months!

YOUNG WOMAN. Are you sure? How do you know that?

YOUNG MAN. Everybody says so. It cannot last longer. Our King is the greatest fighting-man in all Christendom. And the infidel are cowardly folk who do not know how to fight. And with all the Christian people, fighting side by side like brothers in one common cause! It cannot last longer.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes. . . .

YOUNG MAN. Be brave, Ursula.

YOUNG WOMAN. And what am I to think about, all the time you are gone? Six months is a very, very long time.

YOUNG MAN. Why, you must think of me, riding into Damascus and Jerusalem, as I shall, in a coat of mail at the head of my troop—for I shall be made a knight, surely, for

bravery on the field of battle—perhaps King Richard himself will knight me; and I shall be made a captain, and ride at the head of my company—perhaps with the head of the Saracen king on the point of my lance! You must think of all that, Ursula.

YOUNG WOMAN. I had rather think of some other things.

YOUNG MAN. And booty and spoils of the unbelievers, silks and jewels, will fall into our hands!

YOUNG WOMAN. Ralph, can you swear you will be true to me all the time you are away? Six months is a long long time.

YOUNG MAN. I shall be true to you, dearest. I could never look at anyone else, and I shall think of you always. But, Ursula. . . .

YOUNG WOMAN. Yes, my love?

YOUNG MAN. Are you sure that you can wait for me?

YOUNG WOMAN. Quite sure. Quite quite sure. O, Ralph! promise me that you will come back safe and whole!

YOUNG MAN. I shall come back to you.

YOUNG WOMAN. But safe and whole?

YOUNG MAN. Safe and whole.

YOUNG WOMAN. O God bless you, dear Ralph, I mustn't stop you. I have been selfish in wanting to keep you, please God forgive me for it, I won't try to hold you. Good-bye, my dear, good-bye! I know it is God's will that you should go, so God will protect you. Good-bye!

Exit hurriedly.

YOUNG MAN. Good-bye, dear Ursula.

Exit in the opposite direction very slowly.

Enter ELDERLY MERCHANT, *his* WIFE, *his* SON *who is about to take the Cross, and a* YOUNGER DAUGHTER.

ELDERLY MERCHANT. The cause is a just and holy one, my

boy. For my own sake, and for your mother's, I would to God you had not made this vow. But God forbid that we should prevent you! And it comforts me much that you will have with you our own King Richard, who is the greatest fighting-man in Christendom. Though for my part, I had rather see him here at home; in his absence I have grave fears for the future of this kingdom, even graver than I have for you, my son. For our king has been little enough in his England; he hardly knows our northern speech; and a king should be ever among his own people to comfort them, for without him they perish.

SON. I shall pray for you all at home, Father; for I am sure God will protect *us*, who have the Pope's blessing upon our venture. It is for you that I worry.

WIFE. O Harry, Harry, to-morrow night you will lie somewhere on the road to Dover, and I shall not smoothe your bed for you!

SON. But the wars will soon be over, Mother, and back I shall come, straight and strong, and take care of you and Father in your old age, and dance at Edith's wedding.

WIFE. You are our only son, Harry.

ELDERLY MERCHANT. You may see much sin and evil in the wars, Harry. But that you have ever been an honest boy, with no inclination to bad company—had your brother lived, I had meant you for the priesthood, boy—I had said you were too young. And I say this, Harry: I had far rather you were slain in Syria than came back tainted with any of the evil you will meet.

WIFE. O Edward, do not say that. You know our Harry would not.

SON. If my life is spared to me, Father, you shall have me back unsoiled. Ours is a high and holy cause, the holiest war, I think that ever was fought: I had rather give my life than betray the Name I take.

ELDERLY MERCHANT. Well said, Harry, well said.

WIFE. Now, Harry, come back as early as you can, because this is your last night with us; I have all your clothes to make ready.

SON. Yes, Mother, as soon as the bishop has blessed us.

WIFE. And, Harry, I have made you a knitted belt against the cold, and some other little things you may need.

SON. Against the cold, in Syria, Mother!

WIFE. Ah, son, you may be cold enough one night, lying out asleep beneath the stars.

SON. Oh, Mother, we must be more cheerful than that! Well, Edith, what shall I bring you back from the Holy Land? Some silks and jewels, such as the Eastern people have in plenty?

DAUGHTER. O yes, Harry, I should love that!

SON. Or perhaps King Saladin's head in a golden coffer?

DAUGHTER. No, please, Harry, the silks and jewels.

SON. I will, I will. I'll be home early, Mother.

Exeunt severally.

The curtains open. An altar is disclosed; the two young MEN *before it, their friends and relations in the background. The* BISHOP, *with* ATTENDANTS *and* KNIGHTS TEMPLAR, *enters to perform the ceremony of blessing those who wish to take the Cross. The candidates come forward and kneel.*

℣. In nomine. . . .

℟. Amen.

℣. Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

℟. Qui fecit cœlum et terram.

BISHOP *gives first line of "Vexilla Regis Prodeunt":* CHOIR *and later strings take this up. After first verse,* BISHOP *says "Pater Noster" secretly, ending aloud,*

℣. Et ne nos inducas in temptationem.

℟. Sed libera nos a malo.

℣. Domine, exaudi orationem meam.

℟. Et clamor meus veniat ad te.
℣. Dominus vobiscum.
℟. Et cum spiritu tuo.
℣. Oremus:

Deus invictæ potentiæ, Deus majestatis immensæ, Deus fidelium omnium peregrinantium auxilium, plena et perfecta consolatio, qui famulis tuis arma victricia tribuis, quæsumus has cruces in tuo nomine formatas bene ✠ dicere digneris, et venerandæ Crucis vexillum sit ei, ei robur invictissimum contra hostis tentamenta nequissimi, sitque ei in vita salus, in via defensio, in domo protectio, et ubique præsidium sempiternum, per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum. . . .

The BISHOP *sprinkles two red linen crosses in the form of a Cross with holy water, and fastens one on the breast of each* CANDIDATE, *saying*:

Accipe signum crucis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti, in figuram passionis, Crucis, et mortis Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi, et ad tui corporis et animæ defensionem. Amen. [*So to each.*]

Then he says:

Ut divinæ bonitatis gratia post iter expletum salvus et emendatus ad nos valeas remeare, per Jesum. . . .

ALL *kneel.*

Pater noster. . . .

ALL *join.*

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.
℟. In æternum et in sæculum sæculi.
℣. Sanctus Deus, Sanctus fortis, Sanctus immortalis.
℟. Miserere nobis, Domine, miserere nobis.
℣. Respice, Domine, faciem Christi tui.
℟. Et exaudi preces servorum tuorum
℣. Adjuva nos, Deus salutaris noster.
℟. Ut leberati serviamus tibi.

℣. Alleva manus tuas super gentes alienas.
℟. Ut videant, et agnoscant potentiam tuam.
℣. Hostium nostrorum tolle superbiam.
℟. Et eorum contumaciam prosterne.
℣. Effunde iram tuam in gentes, quæ te non noverunt.
℟. Et in regna quæ nomen tuum non invicaverunt.
℣. Ecce, inimici tui, Domine, surrexerunt.
℟. Et qui oderunt te extulerunt caput.
℣. Mitte, nobis, Domine, auxilium de sancto.
℟. Et de Syon tuere nos.

ALL *stand.*

℣. Domine, exaudi precem meam.
℟. Et clamor meus veniat ad te.
℣. Dominus vobiscum.
℟. Et cum spiritu tuo.
Oremus:

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui pretioso sanguine dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi genus humanum redimere, ac in ejus humilitate jacentem mundum erigere dignatus es, tribue quæsumus ut hic famulus tuus per te redemptus, qui adversus impias Tartarorum et Turcorum gentes ceterasque barbarorum nationes vivificæ Crucis inimicos pro tui nominis gloria arma suscepturus est et pugnaturus, virtutis tui brachio sublevatus ad ecclesiam tuam victricia signa reportent, per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. . . .

BISHOP *sprinkles the* CANDIDATE *with holy water, and with his hand makes over him the sign of the Cross, saying:*
In hoc signo ✠ vade, in hoc signo ✠ vince, in hoc signo ✠ revertere.

He kisses the face of the CANDIDATES, *saying to each:*
Pax tibi.

℟. Et cum spiritu tuo.

The BYSTANDERS *then kiss the Cross fixed on the breast of one of the* CANDIDATES. ALL *gradually go out, the lights fading as they go. The Builders' Song is heard.*

We have worked and have fought
For this London of ours;
Our lives have been bought
By Our Lord on the Cross;
We are those who pay rent
To the temporal powers;
Of our lives misspent
Our Lord bears the loss.

A Church for us all and work for us all and God's world for us all even unto this last.

With strength that was warmed
In verminous rooms,
With hands that were formed
In resentful wombs,
We will build the new towers
And fashion the shrine
In this London of ours
For the Bread and the Wine.

A Church for us all and work for us all and God's world for us all even unto this last.

As the song ends, the lights reveal the east end of the Church nearly finished, with ETHELBERT, ALFRED *and* EDWIN *at work on it.*

ALFRED. Well, it don't seem 'ardly yesterday we was thinkin' we wouldn't never get this job done. And that old contractor 'e fair put the wind up me, 'e did. And now

look at us! Ain't nothin' 'e can grumble at 'ere, is there?

EDWIN. Yes, it do a'most seem a miracle, as you might say, the way things 'ave come right.

ETHELBERT. Well, me lad, when a thing comes as near a miracle as this, it'd be splittin' 'airs to call it anythink else.

EDWIN. You know, I 'alf believe there was meanin' in what that bloke said.

ALFRED. What bloke?

EDWIN. That nice old parson what said 'e was a monk in the time o' King 'Enerey. Blimey, when a bloke drops round of a sudden and says 'e was a monk in the time o' King 'Enerey, and spins a credible yarn about it too, that ain't what you'd call *normal*, is it?

ALFRED. Yes, but what's that you mean about 'is meanin'?

EDWIN. Well, if you recollect, the meanin' of 'is meanin' was this: 'e said, 'e and 'is mates was a-goin' to work with us. "Visible and invisible," that's what 'e said. We only saw 'em for a moment, to be sure, in some queer kind o' ancient garb; but if you remember rightly it was from that time things begun to come to rights.

ALFRED. Yes, that's all in order, Ted, but 'ow do you explain it? I suppose it can't 'ave been real. What if we all 'ad a dream together?

ETHELBERT. Fred, I'm afraid you've got that disease they call the modern mind. Which is as much as to say, you'll take no end of trouble to explain away what any man in 'is senses would just believe and take for granted. But don't let's argue about it. We 'ad a lot o' trouble, one way and another, and we ain't finished yet.

A VOICE. Bert! Bert!

ETHELBERT. What's that? Lor-love-a-duck, it's the missus!

Enter MRS. ETHELBERT *with marketing bag, hilariously.*

ETHELBERT. Why, 'ow on earth did you 'appen along?

MRS. ETHELBERT. Oh, I just ambled in unconscious. But, Bert, I near died o' larfin', I did, when I 'eard you talkin' to that young man. That one as wanted you to leave off buildin' 'cause it was a church, and 'ad so much to say for 'isself. You didn't 'alf tick 'im off! I thought 'e was goin' to 'ave you once or twice, but I must say you was too artful for 'im, Bert. I got to admit it, all the time. Proud o' you I was, Bert, and no mistake.

ETHELBERT. Why, you don't mean to tell me you was there all the time, Ma?

MRS. ETHELBERT. Wasn't I! I see that crowd, and I 'eard the young man talkin', and then I 'eard you answerin' up to 'im. So I says to myself, there's old Dad playin' the fool again, I'd best listen in. But I was proud o' you, Bert, and no mistake.

ETHELBERT. Well, I'm bound to say I never seed you.

MRS. ETHELBERT. Oh, I knows 'ow to make myself invisible. Don't I look it? There's more I 'ears nor ever I chatters about, Bert. But I'm forgettin'. What I come to say is this. I thinks to myself, my Bert deserves somethink for that, 'e do, so I 'ops 'ome, and I brought you along a drop o' satin. Four glasses and all [*produces them*] I 'aven't forgotten 'em, and we're goin' to drink your 'ealth, Bert.

ALFRED AND EDWIN. 'Ear! 'ear!

MRS. ETHELBERT [*pouring, to* ALFRED]. You needn't be afraid o' losin' consciousness, young man, I put a drop o' water to it, as much as I thought to be judicious. I'm beginnin' to rumble now, Bert, what comes o' all that readin' you do at night. Well, 'ere's your very good 'ealth.

ALFRED AND EDWIN. To you, Bert! (*etc.*) *For he's a jolly . . .*

ETHELBERT. 'Arf a mo'. Gents all and lady, if I may be allowed to say, I maintain as this 'ere is too solemn a occasion for drinkin' the 'ealth of a mortal and perishable individual like your 'umble, if you take my meanin'.

MRS. ETHELBERT. O, Bert, don't you go talkin' like that, or you'll make me cry.

ETHELBERT. Cheer up, old dear, there ain't no occasion for tears. What I mean is, we've got a 'ealth to drink, my old lady 'avin' provided the wherewithal, as you might say. Lady and gents, I give you THE CHURCH WE'RE BUILDIN', MAY IT LAST FOREVER!

ALL. THE CHURCH WE'RE BUILDIN', MAY IT LAST FOREVER!

MRS. ETHELBERT. Now, Bert, now all this 'ere pomp and ceremony is over, I think it's a proper occasion for you to give us a song.

ALFRED AND EDWIN. That's right, Bert! Give us a song!

ETHELBERT. Lady and gents, I beg leave to state that my voice ain't what it used to be, what with bein' out o' practice, and the fog we've 'ad this winter, and one thing and another. What would you like to 'ear me sing?

MRS. ETHELBERT. Bert, you know! [*Nudges him.*]

ETHELBERT. Oh, you mean that song you used to love to 'ear me sing when we was a-courtin'. [*Sings*] *At Trinity Church I met my doom.* That the one you mean, Mother?

MRS. ETHELBERT. Bert, I'm ashamed o' you. If you don't be'ave yourself I'll give you a good slap on the face, I will.

ALFRED AND EDWIN. 'Ear! 'ear!

MRS. ETHELBERT. Bert, anybody'd think you 'adn't 'ad no re'earsin', they would. You 'aven't 'ad a lapsis o' memory, 'ave you? 'Ere's 'undreds and 'undreds of people all waitin' to 'ear you sing that song what was wrote for you special.

ETHELBERT [*with a start*]. Oh, askin' your pardon all. 'Ere goes.

SONG

ETHELBERT.

When I was a lad what 'ad almost no sense
Then a gentle flirtation was all my delight;
And I'd often go seekin' for ex-pe-ri-ence

Along the New Cut of a Saturday night.
It was on a May evenin' I'll never forget
That I found the reward of my diligent search;
And I made a decision I never regret,
Which led to a weddin' at Trinity Church.

MRS. ETHELBERT.
When I was a delicate slip of a maid
What could eat nothin' more than a couple o' chops,
Of a Saturday night I occas'nally strayed
Along the New Cut for to look at the shops.
Me 'avin' no other design at the start,
You may well be surprised by the end of me search,
For a 'andsome young bricklayer captured me 'eart
And led me all blushin' to Trinity Church.

ETHELBERT.
Now 'ere is the moral with which this song ends,
So as not to leave nobody left in the lurch:
I am proud to be foreman o' this group o' friends,
What 'as 'ere been engaged in constructin' this church.

MRS. ETHELBERT.
That statement's significant, comin' from he
What 'as such reputation as no one can smirch;
To which I will add that I'm 'appy to be
The wife of the foreman what's buildin' this church.

Enter the MAJOR, MILLICENT *and* MRS. POULTRIDGE.

MAJOR. Well, here we are. That's the new church, over there.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. I'm afraid I left my glasses in the car. What *are* those workmen about? They seem to have been *singing*! And I do believe they have a gin bottle! Really, I think it's disgraceful. Disgraceful, I call it.

MAJOR. How do you know it's a gin bottle, if you haven't got your glasses?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, one of those beverages. And I believe—yes, it is—they've got a *woman* with them.

MAJOR. I'm not surprised. That's what comes of democracy. Turn us all out of our jobs, you women do. That's what causes unemployment: women taking men's jobs away. They live at home; so they can afford to work for lower wages.

MILLICENT. Oh, I don't think she's *working*. See, she's saying good-bye to them.

MRS. ETHELBERT. Well, tar, tar, boys. Don't forget you're goin' to take me to the pictures to-night, Bert.

ETHELBERT. That's right, Mother.

Exit MRS. ETHELBERT.

MAJOR. Well, anyway, we didn't come here to supervise the workmen, but to look at the church. They've got it nearly finished. What do you think of it?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, Major, I must say. If you call this a church, I'm glad *I* don't have to worship here, that's all *I* have to say.

MAJOR. Why, what's wrong with it? It looks a good sound church, to me.

The WORKMEN *go round to the other side of the apse and are seen no more.*

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, I may be old-fashioned, and I'm not ashamed of it if I am; but these modernistic churches seem to me to show a shocking lack of *devoutness*.

MAJOR. What d'you mean by devoutness?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, I mean what you feel when you go into one of our dear old simple late Gothic churches. Even the *ivy* seems to make a difference; it seems to me that

God made ivy to help us to pray. But of course you can't expect to have ivy in town. I do believe that if the Church gives up Gothic, it may come to disestablishment, or re-union, or nonconformity, or almost anything.

MILLICENT. I suppose you worship in a Gothic church?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. The purest Gothic. Our architect chose the style of fourteen eighty-four.

MAJOR. Why fourteen eighty-four?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. So that it should not be Tudor, of course. And Lady Fastness says that there isn't one thing among all our church furniture that is more than four or five years out from that date.

MILLICENT. Have you got a vicar belonging to that period too?

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, no, I must say that in some ways the vicar is almost unpleasantly modern. Some of the things he does are so modern as to make him seem almost an *anachronism* in that perfect setting. But, Major, what are they doing about the stained-glass windows?

MAJOR. Stained-glass windows? I'm afraid there isn't money enough to think about stained glass yet. They'll be glad enough to have plain glass.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Oh, dear! that is a pity. What's a church without stained glass? It's hardly a church at all until you get stained glass. So bleak. What is that lovely line of Keats, *dim religious light*? Or is it George Herbert?

MILLICENT. I can't feel as you do about stained glass, Mrs. Poultridge. I believe that—especially in these times, when we are all so poor—simplicity should be the keynote in churchbuilding. That sounds like a quotation, doesn't it? But I don't care if it is.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, if you mean late Gothic simplicity. . . .

MILLICENT. I don't. I mean simplicity. What Cranmer and those other Oxford men went to the stake for. Excuse

my warmth, Mrs. Poultridge; but you know I was at Lady Margaret.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Oh, yes, dear, I was at Newnham, like Cranmer. But I *do* want to hear your views about simplicity.

MAJOR. What on earth are you two arguing about? I'm not a University man, myself; I say you learn a lot more in the Army.

MILLICENT. I *should* like to explain what I mean, especially as you are interested in this church, Uncle John, and can exert your influence when it comes to the decoration. I don't agree with Mrs. Poultridge. I don't believe in all this period decoration. I think there is far too much decoration. I don't believe that our English religion needs to depend upon Art. Religion is religion, and Art is Art; and the people who want Art can go to exhibitions and cocktail parties.

MAJOR. I say, Milly, you've no need to go running down cocktail parties.

MILLICENT. I beg your pardon, Uncle John, but this is a subject I do feel strongly about. When I go into one of these stuffy churches full of whatnots and rows and rows of painted plaster saints, I declare I want to knock the heads off of every one of them.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Really, Millicent, you *are* an iconoclast!

MILLICENT. You mustn't think I'm bigoted. I'm sure nobody's more broadminded than I am. In fact, if I wasn't so broadminded I wouldn't feel so strongly.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Well, of course, dear, very often these decorations are cheaply made; and when they are not in the proper period, I quite agree with you. But you must admit that sometimes they are very tasteful.

MILLICENT. No, Mrs. Poultridge, that's just the point. I say these things are *always* in bad taste. It's the *vulgarity* of

it all that I loathe so. *All* church decoration is vulgar. It's not English. And it's throwing away money that ought to be spent on other things—libraries and health centres and milk for the children——

MAJOR. O, come now, Milly!

MILLICENT. I mean it, Uncle John. If you take money from those things to decorate a church you're worshipping idols.

MAJOR. Really, you talk like Oliver Cromwell.

MRS. POULTRIDGE. Or Henry the Eighth——

Sound of a Lutheran hymn. The lights change to an angry glow. The WORKMEN *and* VISITORS *have disappeared. On the hill is a* PREACHER *of Reformation times.*

PREACHER. Now first of all, brethren, as touching the worship of images, which has long been a gross and Babylonish superstition in this land. God hath said: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image." Therefore look you well to it, that no images abide in your churches, neither let them be carried away by superstitious folk who cling to them; but take them down, take them out yourselves, and destroy them utterly, whether they be graven, or molten, or painted or woven in silk; whether of gold or silver or brass or stone or canvas or glass. Thus shall they not serve again as baits of the Devil; and the Temple of God shall be purged.

Enter a crowd of 1640, *bearing various "images", etc., taken from the churches and intended for destruction. Mourners over the desecration chant the "Reproaches" at the foot of the hill.*

PREACHER. Oh London, London, repent, repent. Repent, all ye unpreaching prelates, so troubled with lordly living, so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their rents, dancing in their dominions, burdened with

ambassages, pampering of their paunches; munching in their mangers, and moiling in their gay manors and mansions. Repent, ye knavish monks, that entice the people to make pilgrimage to your rich shrines where you do nod and kneel and mumble to heathenish idols and cozen the simple folk of plate and jewels and coin in return for promises false and fair, indulgences and remission of sins. It is a holy work, and approved of God, that the idolator should be spoiled.

A Tudor crowd enter with gold and jewels from churches and shrines; they exult over their booty. Enter a KING'S OFFICER.

KING'S OFFICER. Oyez! oyez! oyez! Forasmuch as the King's Majesty hath need presently of a mass of money, therefore Commissioners shall be addressed into all shires of England to take into the King's hands such church plate as remaineth, to be employed unto His Highness's use.

Accordingly, we the Servants of His Majesty's Commissioners, do command you to surrender, as loyal subjects of His Majesty Edward the Sixth, King of England, Defender of the Faith, such plate, jewels and other furniture as you have removed from churches in the purging of this land from idolatry, to His Majesty's Commissioners, to be employed unto His Highness's use.

Groans from the crowd. As the OFFICER *moves to collect the gold and jewels, lights alter to show the* MOURNERS *again. Then the* PREACHER *is heard.*

PREACHER. Their stinted service is a Popish beadroll full of vain repetitions as if seven paternosters did please the Lord better than six; and as if the chattering of a parrot were much more the better, because it is much more than enough. Their tossing to and fro of psalms and sentences is like tennis play whereto God is called a judge who can do best and be most gallant in his worship; as be organ

solfa-ing, pricksong chaunting, bussing and mumbling very roundly, on divers hands. Thus they have a show of religion, but indeed they turn it to gaming, and play mock-holiday with the worship of God.

The CROWD *enter with altar-books; they deface and cut them, and, bringing more fuel, make a bonfire. The* PREACHER *again declaims, as the lights fade.*

GOD will come, GOD will come, he will not tarry long away. He will come upon such a day as we nothing look for him, and at such hour as we know not. He will come and cut us in pieces. He will reward us as He doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren; where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. And let here be the end of our tragedy if you will. These be the delicate dishes prepared for the world's well-beloved children. These be the wafers and junkets provided for worldly prelates, wailing and gnashing of teeth. Can there be any mirth, where these two courses last all the feast? Here we laugh, there we shall weep. Our teeth make merry here, ever dashing in delicates; there we shall be torn with teeth, and do nothing but gnash and grind our own.

CHORUS.

Son of Man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears
And set thine heart upon all that I show thee.
Who is this that has said: the House of GOD is a House of Sorrow;
We must walk in black and go sadly, with longdrawn faces,
We must go between empty walls, quavering lowly, whispering faintly,
Among a few flickering scattered lights?

They would put upon GOD their own sorrow, the grief they should feel
For their sins and faults as they go about their daily occasions.
Yet they walk in the street proudnecked, like thoroughbreds ready for races,
Adorning themselves, and busy in the market, the forum,
And all other secular meetings.
Thinking good of themselves, ready for any festivity,
Doing themselves very well.
Let us mourn in a private chamber, learning the way of penitence,
And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints.

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.
Out of the formless stone, when the artist unites himself with stone,
Spring always new forms of life, from the soul of man that is joined to the soul of stone;
Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living or lifeless
Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour.
Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecisions,
Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place of thoughts and feelings,
There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation.

LORD, shall we not bring these gifts to Your service?
Shall we not bring to Your service all our powers
For life, for dignity, grace and order,
And intellectual pleasures of the senses?

The LORD who created must wish us to create
And employ our creation again in His service
Which is already His service in creating.
For Man is joined spirit and body,
And therefore must serve as spirit and body.
Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;
Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple;
You must not deny the body.

Now you shall see the Temple completed:
After much striving, after many obstacles;
For the work of creation is never without travail;
The formed stone, the visible crucifix,
The dressed altar, the lifting light,

Light

Light

The visible reminder of Invisible Light.

Curtains open, disclosing the apse completed, and an altar standing on the top of the hill. CRAFTSMEN *are shown in rhythmical movement: Painters frescoing the apse; Stone-carvers at work on the crucifix and the front of the altar; Wood-carvers making candlesticks and book-rest; Weavers and lacemaker producing curtains and linen cloth; Metal workers beating out chalice and paten; Illuminator decorating altar-book. When ready, all these articles of furniture are put in their places.*

ETHELBERT, ALFRED *and* EDWIN *have watched from a corner with great interest. The two latter now come forward to look at the craftsmen's work.*

ALFRED. Well, it do seem queer not to be workin' on this old church any more. You can't 'elp bein' fond o' the place, after 'er givin' us so much trouble and then comin' all straight and right in the end.

EDWIN. Yes, it's as if she was somethin' what 'ad *growed* under our 'ands, ain't it? Like bringin' up a baby in a hincubator.

ALFRED. Yes, and now she's growed up and can stand on 'er own, it makes you feel lonesome like, don't it?

ETHELBERT [*who has contemplated the building in reverent silence*]. Aw! . . . But what I'd like to see is more diamonds, and rubies and emeralds, and drap'ries stiff with solid gold; because there ain't anythink too good for this old church, there ain't, not to my way of thinkin'.

ALFRED. But they 'ave made a neat job of it, I will say.

EDWIN. Ah, they knowed we was watchin' of 'em, and would remark any piece of carelessness.

ALFRED. Yes, it ain't 'alf bad. [*Pause*]

ETHELBERT. Well, boys, what do you say to a pint of Oh Be Joyful?

EDWIN. O.K., chief.

ETHELBERT. Now, look 'ere, young fellow me lad, ain't I told you afore I won't 'ave these foreign expressions used in my 'earin'. Words like "O.K." ain't English; and what ain't English is vulgar.

EDWIN. Sorry, boss.

ETHELBERT. "Sorry, boss!" Young Ted, everythink you touch you lower. Don't you go openin' your mouth like that in the Bunch o' Grapes. Well, we'd best be movin'. I've got a proper thirst, I 'ave. And the next time we'll meet 'ere will be when the Lord Bishop gives 'is blessin'. We'll all be there, won't we?

ALFRED AND EDWIN. That's right! That's right!

ETHELBERT. Right! Comin' along, then?

Exeunt. Curtains close.

CHORUS.
How lovely are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.

I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids;
Until I find out a place for the LORD;
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.

We have witnessed the building of the House,
The weak foundations made strong, brick laid upon brick;
While encompassed with enemies armed with the spears of mistaken ideals;
Encompassed with enemies armed with the swords of the will to power,
Encompassed by enemies armed with the deadly gas of indifference.
We have seen the House adorned, made ready for prayer and worship.
And now is the dedication, now shall the House
Be sanctified to the LORD.

But first you shall be reminded of other dedications
Out of the distant past of London, out of times less dim:
So that you may remember
That the Temple is forever building, forever to be destroyed, forever to be restored,
So that you may remember, seeing the past,
The dim waste plains of the future, where the Temple is still to be built,

So that you may remember
The lives that await their time to be born, to be dedicated
On the dim vast plain of the future, burning as lonely lights.

CHORUS LEADERS.
First you shall hear
Of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, the Abbey at Westminster,
How it was dedicated
Not by the Bishop Mellitus, Bishop of London,
Because one had been there before him.
One came, not with crowds and processions
In view of the people, by day;
But came alone in the night,
Alone but for one of his trade:
A fisherman served by a fisherman,
St. Peter, and a Thames-side fisherman.
And thus the church received no usual dedication
Until it was wholly rebuilt
In the reign of Edward, King and Confessor;
Which also you shall be shown.

ST. PETER (THE ROCK) *and a* FISHERMAN *are seen returning to the Thames shore.*

FISHERMAN. Who are you, Father? who have consecrated this church, as the Bishop was to have done to-morrow? You're one of the foreign clergy, I can see that, Father; but who are you, if you pardon me asking? Was all this by the Holy Pope's orders, Father?

PETER. By the order of one who came before him, my son. I am Peter, servant of God, once a fisherman like you.

FISHERMAN. O Lord, save me from this miracle! [*Crossing himself and falling on his knees in terror*] Oh, the blessed Saint Peter himself! Am I to die at once, unshriven as I am,

I that have seen what mortal eyes should not see. O Blessed St. Peter, make my sins to be forgiven, or I am a lost man.

PETER. Fear not, my son, but do that to which I now bid you. When you have ferried me over, you shall see me no more. But this is what you are to do. You are to return, and cast your nets, and you shall have a great draught of salmon. And this shall be for a sign of my coming. And of these fish you shall choose the finest, and bear it to the Abbot, and you shall tell him of all that you have seen and heard this night. You shall tell him that his church has been dedicated, and that this is not to be done again. Then will he in and will see the holy water, the oil and the crosses, the half-burnt candles, and the alphabets, Greek and Latin, upon the wall. And you shall tell your brother fishermen, all those that fish between Staines and Gravesend, of all these things; and they are to bring every year, on the morning of my dedication, an offering of salmon to the Abbey.

FISHERMAN. All this I will do. [*Rises and they go toward the wherry.*]

The lights become stronger as a procession is heard approaching. The ARCHBISHOP, *the* ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER, *the* QUEEN *and their attendants are on their way to dedicate Edward the Confessor's new Abbey Church of Westminster. A* FISHERMAN *offers a salmon to the* ABBOT.

CHORUS LEADERS.

And now, centuries later,
In the prosperous City of London,
The scullion becomes a master,
The master gathers wealth,
The rich man becomes the Lord Mayor,
And builds a church in the City.
One such, you shall now see.
There are, alas, many more,
Even in the City of London,

Who have heard the name of Whittington,
Richard, familiarly mentioned,
Than have prayed in the church he built
So that men in the City might pray:
St. Michael Paternoster Royal.
You shall now see Dick as you know him,
And then the dedication of his church.

Ballet: The legend of DICK WHITTINGTON *and his* CAT.

Procession to dedicate the Church of St. Michael, Paternoster Royal, on its rebuilding by Sir Richard Whittington, Lord Mayor of London.

CHORUS LEADERS.

Once more, centuries pass,
And my ears have heard in the distance
The wailing of plague-stricken London;
Parting of husbands and wives,
Of parents and children;
And the creaking of loaded carts
Which bear them to a common pit;
And over all, wandering preachers'
Voices in lunatic prophesy.
And now a great fire has ravaged the City;
And over the coals, as the phoenix,
The spirit of Christopher Wren
Exults in new life and creation.
The dome of St. Paul, which was formed in his mind,
Will at last arise to completion
Enthroned on the hill of King Sabert,
Set as a symbol for London,
Receiving its dedication
In the reign of the great Queen Anne.

WREN, PEPYS *and* EVELYN *seated round a dining-table. Nuts and wine.*

EVELYN. I marvel, Dr. Wren, that with all the building you have set about, and with all the vaster designs which no doubt are in your mind, you can bring yourself to talk of lighter matters as we have been doing, and condescend to gossip with lighter men than yourself. Were I a great architect, and had I your opportunity, I do believe I should notice other men at such a time only in so far as they were fit to advance my purposes: draughtsmen, masons, stone-carvers, suchlike men I would take notice of, and others ignore.

WREN. I never work of evenings. And, Mr. Evelyn, there is another reason for frequent and regular relaxation. The designs which haunt my imagination, when I think of what might be done—in this city which Providence has thought fit to visit with fire, and thus prepare for the builder—of what might be done, I say: to build here by Thames' side the most beautiful city of all Europe, excelling Vicenza or Rome itself; these inventions in my mind, I say, which may never come to birth, threaten to devour the womb that nourishes them. 'Tis so with all human imaginings. The city of my phantasy will not be made real upon earth, gentlemen. Squalor and filth, and houses expressive of the desolate lives of their inhabitants—these will survive me; and believe me, gentlemen, architectural monsters will raise their horrid heads long after we are gone. Yes, posterity will erect buildings representative of every architectural heresy, embodying every hideous dream that violates the laws of my art. Against thoughts like these, Mr. Evelyn, which dog me like the Furies, I find that a glass of wine and a little gossip and scandal-bearing among friends is a sovereign corrective.

EVELYN. Yet rumour says, Dr. Wren, that your plans for St. Paul's and the city exceed all expectation, and pre-

pare for a very paragon among minsters. I did myself make some proposals to His Majesty, but yours had prevented me.

WREN. They are not too bad, not too bad, Mr. Evelyn. Yet even my plans for St. Paul's are not the plans which *I* wished to execute.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Sir, there is a person who asks to see you; he says, upon urgent business.

WREN. Ah . . . tell him I'm designing St. Paul's.

SERVANT. Very good, sir.

Exit.

PEPYS. I walked to-day in the City, to witness how the demolition of old St. Paul's progressed. Strange, how the sight of stones falling from the top of the steeple do make me seasick; but no hurt, I hear, has yet happened.

WREN. No, Mr. Pepys, no hurt has yet happened; and in that work too I take some pride. It is true that no life has been lost, and no workmen injured. Perhaps it will be said of me in times to come, that as I was the first man of modern times who would have planned and built a whole city—for there were such in antiquity—so I was the first to study and apply the science of removing what should not remain. Would that I might destroy more and build more! Another glass of wine, Mr. Evelyn? Mr. Pepys, another glass of wine: let it inspire you to tell us more of affairs at the Navy Office. . . .

Lights fade. Procession of thanksgiving to St. Paul's with QUEEN ANNE. *Then the curtains open and the* CHORUS *ascend and surround the altar, now furnished and lighted.*

CHORUS.

You have seen the house built, you have seen it adorned
By one who came in the night, it is now dedicated to
GOD.

It is now a visible church, one more light set on a hill
In a world confused and dark and disturbed by portents of fear.
And what shall we say of the future? Is one church all we can build?
Or shall the Visible Church go on to conquer the World?

The great snake lies ever half awake, at the bottom of the pit of the world, curled
In folds of himself until he awakens in hunger and moving his head to right and to left prepares for his hour to devour.
But the Mystery of Iniquity is a pit too deep for mortal eyes to plumb. Come
Ye out from among those who prize the serpent's golden eyes,
The worshippers, self-given sacrifice of the snake. Take
Your way and be ye separate.
Be not too curious of Good and Evil;
Seek not to count the future waves of Time;
But be ye satisfied that you have light
Enough to take your step and find your foothold.

O Light Invisible, we praise Thee!
Too bright for mortal vision.
O Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;
The eastern light our spires touch at morning,
The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,
The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,
Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,
Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.
O Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,
The light of altar and of sanctuary;

Small lights of those who meditate at midnight
And lights directed through the coloured panes of windows
And light reflected from the polished stone,
The gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.
We see the light but see not whence it comes.
O Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light. We are glad when the day ends, when the play ends; and ecstasy is too much pain.
We are children quickly tired: children who are up in the night and fall asleep as the rocket is fired; and the day is long for work or play.
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep and are glad to sleep,
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and the night and the seasons.
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the light and relight it;
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.
Therefore we thank Thee for our little light, that is dappled with shadow.
We thank Thee who hast moved us to building, to finding, to forming at the ends of our fingers and beams of our eyes.
And when we have built an altar to the Invisible Light, we may set thereon the little lights for which our bodily vision is made.
And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!

THE ROCK, NOW ST. PETER

You speak of your church. You have spoken well.
But we who behold the glory of the LORD
With the face unveiled, we are transformed, made new
Into the same image from glory to glory,
As it were, to the Spirit of the LORD.
And where we dwell, there is no Temple. For the LORD
GOD the Almighty, and the Lamb,
They are the Temple. And the lamp thereof is the Lamb
And there with us is night no more, but only

Light

Light

Light of the Light.

THE ROCK *reveals the* BISHOP *who gives the*

BENEDICTION

ALL *stand for this, and then sing together.*

Ill done and undone,
London so fair
We will build London
Bright in dark air,
With new bricks and mortar
Beside the Thames bord
Queen of Island and Water,
A House of Our Lord.

A Church for us all and work for us all and God's world for us all even unto this last.

THE END